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ABSTRACT

Designed for parents in Kentucky, this handbook describes the Kentucky primary program and provides information about how parents can work with schools during the transition from preschool to ensure that their children receive an appropriate education. Children with educational disabilities are served in a variety of ways in the primary program. The primary program is described as a 4-year program encompassing kindergarten through the third grade that includes developmentally appropriate educational practices, multi-age and multi-ability classrooms, continuous progress, authentic assessment, qualitative reporting methods, professional teamwork, and parent and community involvement. The handbook addresses: (1) the feelings parents may have in moving their child from one environment to another; (2) transition tips for all parents; (3) preschool or Head Start staff responsibilities during transition; (4) private preschool program transition; (5) skills that ease public school entry; (6) steps to special education and related services, including the referral process, evaluation, eligibility, program planning, placement, implementation, and review; and (7) tips that may make parents feel more comfortable as they prepare for the Admissions and Release Committee. The handbook also includes a form for providing information about a child, a list of organizational resources, a glossary of relevant terms, and acronyms and program descriptions. Personal experiences of families of children with disabilities are highlighted. (CR)

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# Families and the Transition Process: PRIM LE

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**Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project**

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Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project
Human Development Institute • University of Kentucky • 126 Mineral Industries Building
Lexington, KY 40506-0051 • (606) 257-9117 • FAX (606) 257-4353

**Transition Handbook Committee Members**

Early Intervention to Preschool Handbook Committee

Ann Blackburn, Murray Head Start, Murray
Mary Calie, Kentucky Parent
Phyllis Hall, Anderson County Regional Training Center, Lawrenceburg
Judy Hurst, PUSH Preschool, Frankfort
Kathleen Leavell, Parents Are Teachers, Stanford
Teri Mehler, C.A.P. Child Development, Berea
Brenda Mullins, Kentucky Transition Project
Carol Schroeder, Kentucky Early Intervention System (KEIS), University of Kentucky, Lexington

Preschool To Primary Handbook Committee

Betty Bright, Kentucky Department of Education
Alice Bryant, McCreary County Schools
Diane Hall, Kentucky Parent
Jill Hatch, LKLP Head Start (Leslie, Knott, Letcher, Perry)
Mary Ann May, Lincoln County Schools
Brenda Mullins, Kentucky Transition Project
Stephanie Sciamanna, Kenton County Schools

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We want to welcome you to one of the most exciting adventures in your child's educational journey. Both the preschool and primary programs in your local school are eager to assist in this new phase of your child's growth and development.

This handbook talks about how parents can work with schools to see that their children get an education which meets their individual needs. The primary program is designed to do just that!

## KENTUCKY'S PRIMARY PROGRAM

Classrooms are like children. No two are exactly alike. They may have some of the same features, yet be uniquely different in many ways. This is especially true since the birth of the primary program. The primary program is the first part of the elementary school in which children are enrolled from the time they begin school at age five. The primary program means that instead of going to kindergarten, first, second, and third grade, children enter at age five and remain in primary until the 4th grade. Your school may refer to the first year as kindergarten, but it is actually the first year of primary or P-1.

One of the greatest advantages of the primary program is that all children will learn and mature at their own pace. All children will be leaders and/or followers from one activity to another as their level differs. Children will not be in competition with each other; instead, will be accepted at their own stage of development.

The primary program includes many of the same ingredients found in preschool programs. There are seven basic components evident in all primary classrooms. These include:

- developmentally appropriate educational practices
- multi-age and multi-ability classrooms
- continuous progress
- authentic assessment
- qualitative reporting methods
- professional teamwork
- parent and community involvement

Many parents wonder what the primary classroom will look like. A snapshot picture should reveal lots of active learning taking place. Instructional practices should focus on each child's individual strength while addressing social, emotional, physical, and academic development. Students will be learning mathematics using new and different materials. Major emphasis is placed on language arts. Children learn to read by identifying pictures and letters and learn to write using a "hands-on" approach to learning. This means children learn by doing, by seeing, touching, tasting, moving, and choosing. They are actively involved at learning centers and progress at their own rate. You will not see children just sitting, listening, doing seat work, and ditto sheets. The day's learning activities revolve around a central theme engaging children in meaningful, real life activities.

Children with educational disabilities are served in a variety of ways in the primary program. Teachers collaborate with each other and work together using team teaching techniques. This emphasis on professional teamwork enhances individual learning for all children within the regular classroom.

Children who require specially designed instruction in the classroom at certain times during the day may also visit a resource room at other times. The important thing is that the characteristics, needs, and learning styles of each child are considered in determining the type of program that will work best for him/her. A unique aspect of the primary program is that it shapes the school to fit every child, not the child to fit the school. No longer will a sense of failure cause our youngest students to turn away from learning.

This booklet, about transitioning to the primary program, was developed by families and professionals. Throughout the booklet, you will find some personal experiences that were shared from families across the state. You will find their comments enclosed in boxes. Diane Hall, a mother from Jessamine County, will be your guide throughout the transition process. She is easily recognized by the family symbol accompanying her remarks.

"I feel very fortunate to be in a school district that believes children are better all together and that the parents are an equal and necessary component in the total education of their children."

Beverly Lynch
Paducah, Kentucky

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## PARENT TALK

"Hi, my name is Diane Hall. When my daughter, Sarah, left preschool, I had many basic questions about what was ahead for Sarah. I learned first that instead of Sarah going to Kindergarten, she would enter the primary program. This program is a component of the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) and would allow Sarah to progress at her own pace. Second, I had to learn to trust and build new partnerships. Over the years of working with different agencies, it came as a surprise to me that they sometimes have difficulty working with each other. My thought was, I've trusted them with my Sarah, what can I do to help them build trust with each other?

As parents, our roles in the transition process can be to bridge the gap with examples of mutual trust and confidence in the system. This makes the change less stressful for all involved. The process takes place over time in small steps. I guess that's what transition is really all about!

Sarah really made great strides, and we both enjoyed the primary experience. I believe my partnership with professionals helped me realize that I should be just as involved in my daughter's education as they are. Remember, many parents have been where you are right now. You will find much of what they have learned throughout this booklet.

Congratulations on being ready for this next step. I hope this booklet is helpful and enables you to fully participate in your child's education. If the journey seems long, don't hesitate to call on other parents, people who have worked with your child before, or the current staff of the primary program. Our combined efforts will make Kentucky a better place for children to learn."

## LET'S TALK ABOUT FEELINGS . . .

Moving a child from one environment or agency to another can be an unsettling experience, especially when your child has a special need. Preparing for the change is a part of transition planning. Being with other parents and children with less visible challenges, attending more meetings, and filling out extra forms can trigger strong feelings and unexpectedly reawaken others you haven't had in a long time. **You may experience some or none or all of the feelings described here**. Remember, if you do, that feelings are neither good nor bad; they are real and valid. You have a right to feel and to express how you feel. Talking with other parents who have had similar experiences can be helpful in finding healthy ways to express these feelings. It is important to recognize which feelings assist you with quality parenting and development of positive partnerships in your child's education. So ....

If you are feeling:

**REMEMBER**

- Everyone has difficulty with change.
- To seek information about the transition process. This booklet is one way to gain needed information.
- To talk with other families who have experienced transition into primary.

- You are not alone. Parents often experience more anxiety than their child about new experiences.

- Gaining a clear understanding of your child's needs may be difficult for you as well as the education system.
- Transition and decision making takes time.
- To share your feelings with someone. This might include family, friends, teachers, or counselors.

- You are the expert on your child.
- You are the most important supporter your child has.
- The insight you have gained from personal experience is just as important or more than information gained from professionals.

- This is a new and exciting time for you and your child.
- There is much potential support and encouragement in the relationship to be formed with parents and educators in the public school system.
- Positive partnerships develop when we experience and express belief in one another.

"Gathering information about Sarah's primary program was easier than actually letting her go on to a strange, new setting. Following are some tips that may help you in your transition planning."

## TRANSITION TIPS FOR ALL PARENTS

The transition from one setting to another involves both communication and cooperation among the home, school, community, and other families. The following activities and tips have been helpful to Kentucky families involved in the transition process. Please pick and choose those that will be most helpful for your family and your situation. Whether your child attended a preschool program or not, many of these tips can be especially helpful.

- Start early. Families can never begin this transition process too soon (i.e. keep a folder of samples of artwork/stories at different ages, include copies of medical reports, summaries, etc.). Keep a simple journal (notebook) about your child's activities, interests, and when they started doing what. This collection will quickly provide information to the primary professionals during that transitional period. Remember, don't wait until two weeks before your child will be leaving preschool to begin looking at transition into primary. Think about the entire preschool years as time to explore opportunities to learn more about the primary program in your community.
- Be prepared to share any strategies/methods that are successful for you in working with your child (i.e. behavior situations, communication systems).
- Ask your child's teacher if your child can bring a comfort item from home (i.e. stuffed animal or favorite truck) during the transition period.
- Share with your child's teacher that you can be reached at any time when questions arise.

- Visit and tour your child's future school with or without your child.
- Find out what the primary school offers for new families and attend these functions (i.e. open house, observation scheduling, etc.).
- Meet as many school employees as you can that will be a part of your child's school day (i.e. secretary, bus driver, janitor, teacher, principal).
- Get to know your child's new teacher and arrange for your child to meet him/her before school starts; let the teacher know how you could be able to assist her in the classroom, or find out other ways you could help.

- Ask your child's new teacher for a list of times which would be convenient to talk with him/her throughout the year. Find out other ways you can communicate with each other on a regular basis (i.e. notebook system, phone calls, etc.)
- If your child will have a teaching assistant, meet him/her prior to the start of the school year and observe how he/she works with other children. Be willing to share your knowledge of your child to assist him/her in their understanding of your child's needs (i.e. positioning techniques, feeding, communication, as well as likes, dislikes, etc.)

- Find out about the Family or Parent Resource Centers and how they can help you (i.e. local parent support group).
- Inquire about special transportation, if needed.
- Check buildings to see if they are accessible. Look at room arrangement, restroom adaptations, etc.
- Ask your child's new teacher or specialists to observe your child in his/her current program (i.e. day care, Head Start, public preschool, etc.).

- Talk with other families of children who have already moved into the primary program.
- If local support groups are not available, contact Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network (Ky. SPIN) at 1-800-525-7746, or the Parent Information Network at 502-485-0035 or 502-495-7487.
- Attend your school's PTA or PTO meetings.
- Inquire about opportunities to link with other families throughout your community (i.e. Family Resource Center, Health Department resources, Cooperative Extension Service, etc.)

## YOUR CHILD LEAVING PRESCHOOL OR HEAD START

**If your child is leaving a public school Preschool or Head Start program - the following information may be helpful:**

Both public school Preschool and Head Start staff are responsible for planning transition activities for all children and families.

Specific staff responsibilities to your child and family may include:

- preschool and primary staff participate in joint transition planning (plans involve the entire year);
- written procedures for the transition of children from preschool to primary are used systematically by each preschool teacher;
- preschool and primary teachers work together to plan curriculum (you will see many common activities);
- parent education regarding primary program is offered;
- the preschool teacher visiting the primary program several times a year;
- primary teachers visiting the preschool program to coordinate activities and meet children;
- preschool children visiting the primary program several times before the beginning of school;
- child records are transferred prior to the beginning of school. If your child is in public school, automatic transfer of records occurs. If your child is in Head Start, you may need to sign a release of information. State regulations establish specific guidelines for obtaining medical information and immunization. Your local program will provide you with guidance concerning these. Remember that all records are open to the family for review at any time.

If your child has been receiving special education and related services, then your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be reviewed for services to be delivered in the primary setting. In most cases, there is no need for a new referral but instead a simple annual review of the IEP. This will make it possible for your child to continue to receive special education and related services listed on the IEP or to make changes recommended by the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC, of which you are a member) to meet your child's needs. It is very important for you to understand that some

children may no longer need special education and related services and in those cases, the ARC will recommend your child exit the special education program. The key questions to ask in determining where your child will best be served are:

What does my child need?

Where and how can my child learn best?

According to state and federal guidelines, children may be identified as having a "developmental delay" until six years of age. As your child nears the sixth birthday, and if the ARC determines a need to continue special education and related services, your child will be evaluated for determining a more specific description. Your child's teacher and your local special education director can provide more information concerning developmental delay and other special education terms.

## YOUR CHILD LEAVING PRIVATE PRESCHOOL

**If your child is leaving a private preschool program (church, daycare, etc.), child care home or center, or did not attend a preschool - the following information may be helpful:**

If your child has been in either a private preschool program or child care setting, it is important to involve these providers in the transition process. They have current information pertaining to the provision of a developmentally appropriate program that will enhance your child's continued growth and development.

Check with your current program for any documents to be sent to the school district or additional information which may be needed. These may include:

- Birth Certificate (certificate from the Office of Vital Statistics)
- Social Security Card (copy for folder)
- Immunization Certificate - must be current
- Tuberculin Skin Test Certificate
- Physical Examination Form (on state form)
- Lunch Application Form
- Other program records

You may need to sign a release of information to have information sent. All private preschool programs will vary in their method of transferring information about your child. Some may follow the same procedures as public school or Head Start. Some may have very little information. In either case, it is important for you to assure that critical information regarding your child's needs and past experiences are made available to the primary school.

If you think your child is not ready for the primary program, there are several considerations you must keep in mind. The best placement for any child is in a setting where he/she can participate to the fullest. For 5 year olds, this is almost always the primary program setting. Under certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the parents and the school to select an alternative placement. If this occurs, it is important to remember that this is still the first year of primary school for the child. In addition, the child will be eligible for the same length of day as available to all first year primary (P-1)

Sue Grimes can echo an appreciation for this new approach to education, and how it had benefitted her seven-year-old daughter, Brittany. *"My biggest and best support anywhere came from the Sunshine Center-especially the director. When you have a different set of rules that you don't know anything about, you need someone to walk through the haze and hurt. Brenda was that guide for me. Right now I've got the greatest team of educators possible working with my child. All of them...did everything they could to explain the new system, affirm my feelings, and plan a terrific education for Brittany. That's not to say that every aspect of Brittany's day is perfect now. There are plenty of challenges. The greatest challenge has nothing to do with the school itself-it's more me. Everything is a challenge. Nothing is easy, from getting up in the morning to coming home from school-everything is a challenge. Talking about it right now is a challenge. Knowing it won't go away is a challenge. It may never be easy but I know my daughter has been blessed with a team of professionals who, for now, make it easy as it possibly can be."*

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## SKILLS THAT EASE PUBLIC SCHOOL ENTRY

As children enter kindergarten and primary programs, the following skills have been identified as helpful in easing the transition and adjustment period. Although these skills are helpful, they are not required for entry into the primary program.

**Classroom Rules**

- Walks rather than runs indoors
- Waits quietly in line
- Sits or waits appropriately
- Complies with simple directions provided to a group
- Makes transitions from one activity to another with minimal assistance
- Uses appropriate behaviors to get teacher (staff) attention
- Replaces material, cleans up own activity area
- Stays in own space for activities
- Stays with group outside classroom

**Work Skills**

- Refrains from disturbing the activity of others
- Stops activity when given the direction "stop"
- Works independently on developmentally appropriate material
- Completes tasks when given developmentally appropriate material
- Follows simple directions related to tasks
- Engages in developmentally appropriate activities for 1-3-5-10-15 minutes
- Waits until directions are completed to begin activities

**Communication Skills**

- Comes to adult when signaled
- Communicates own needs and preferences
- Answers questions about self/family
- Attends to peer or adult who is talking to a group

**Social Behavior Skills**

- Responds positively to social recognition and reinforcement
- Modifies behavior when provided with verbal direction
- Follows school rules
- Separates from parents and accepts school personnel
- Interacts cooperatively with others
- Respects others and their property
- Expresses emotions and feelings appropriately
- Exhibits self-control regarding aggressive behavior to self or to others
- Defends self appropriately
- Is willing to try new activities
- Waits to take turns and shares
- Uses imitative behavior appropriately

**Self Management Skills**

- Eats lunch or snack with minimal assistance
- Is aware of/attends to appearance
- Locates and uses restroom
- Cares for bathroom needs
- Puts on/takes off outer clothing with minimal assistance
- Makes transition between classroom and transportation with minimal assistance
- Seeks out adult if hurt or cannot handle social situations
- Is aware of obvious dangers and avoids them
- Locates own possessions and returns them to appropriate place

Byrd, R. & Ross, B. (1991). *Project* STEPS *Helpful Entry Level Skills Checklist.* Child Development Centers of the Bluegrass, Lexington, Kentucky.

## 7 STEPS TO SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES

If you are concerned about your child needing special education or related services see the following Seven Steps.

Federal and state laws and regulations include specific steps to ensure that the rights of children with educational disabilities and their parents or guardians are protected. These rights open doors to partnerships between families and the school district in decision making about your child's education.

The "Seven Steps to Special Education and Related Services" are outlined for you in a condensed version. This handbook does not attempt to answer all your questions about this process. For a more in-depth look, ask your local special education director or your Family Resource Director for a copy of "Your Child's Education", an excellent resource document through the Division of Exceptional Children Services, Kentucky Department of Education, Frankfort, Ky. The address is in the back of the handbook along with other helpful resources.

| THE STEPS | THE PROCESS |
|---|---|
| **Step 1 Referral:** A written request for your child to be individually tested to determine if he/she has an educational disability and needs specially designed instruction and related services. | If your child is in public preschool and you want to make a referral, you should contact the building principal. If your child is not in a preschool program, you should contact the Director of Special Education in your school district. Your child may have been screened to check on how your child was developing. As a result of the screening, a referral for further evaluation might be made. The school district must have your written permission before your child is individually evaluated for the first time. Your written permission is required by federal and state regulations. When the school receives a referral, the process starts. The Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) is a team of professionals, with you as a member, who closely looks at your child's strengths and needs. You will be asked to attend an (ARC) meeting to discuss the referral. |

*"Sarah was already in a private preschool program when I contacted the Guidance Counselor at the school in our district. I had copies of Sarah's records sent from that program to help provide information to the ARC when we met to discuss the referral."*



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| THE STEPS | THE PROCESS |
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| **Step 2 Evaluation:** A process of gathering information about your child's educational needs and abilities. | Once you have given written permission for your child to be individually evaluated, a team of people who work with your child will be chosen to help evaluate his/her abilities and needs. They will use procedures such as individual tests, review of your child's preschool records, behavioral observations, interviews and rating scales. This evaluation will be at no cost to you, and you will be a part of the evaluation team to provide information about your child. When the evaluation process is completed, you will receive written notice of the ARC meeting to discuss the evaluation results. You may receive the evaluation information before the ARC meeting. |
| <br>*"I knew Sarah better than anyone else so I had a lot of information to share about Sarah's growth and development over time. Her evaluation information was sent from her preschool program, so with that plus what I had to share, the ARC was able to discuss the referral and determine what further evaluations would be necessary."* | |
| **Step 3 Eligibility:** Reviewing the complete evaluation to determine if your child has an educational disability that adversely affects (has negative impact on) the educational performance of your child. | The ARC, with you as a member, will use the evaluation results to determine if your child has a disability that could adversely affect (has a negative impact on) the educational performance of your child to the extent your child needs specially designed instruction and related services. When eligibility is determined, the ARC will develop a written Individualized Educational Program for your child. If your child does not qualify, the ARC will develop a written remedial plan to address the concerns which led to the referral. It is very important for you to attend this meeting. If you cannot, you can call and ask for another meeting time. The school district wants you to take part in all discussions about your child. |
| <br>*"I had assumed that because Sarah received early intervention services and then preschool services that she would automatically qualify for special services in the public school primary program. I soon learned that she had to fit into the categories that matched school system requirements. During this time, I tried to stay in close contact with the school system people so I could make sure they knew that I was very interested in being a part of these decisions and ARC meetings."* | |



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| THE STEPS | THE PROCESS |
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| **Step 4 Program Planning:** Writing an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for your child. | After the ARC has decided that your child has an educational disability and needs specially designed instruction and related services, the ARC will develop a written IEP for your child. (Remember, you are the most important member of the ARC.) This IEP is written especially for your child; and it tells what your child needs and includes the services that will be provided to meet those needs. The IEP will include a statement of your child's present level of educational performance (what your child can do and cannot do). It will list annual goals and short term objectives (what your child will be working on). It will state specific services (such as Speech/language). It will include the extent of least restrictive environment (LRE) (how much of the day your child will be in classes and activities with other primary students who do not have an educational disability), and when the services will start, and how long they will last.<br><br>Annual goals on the IEP include what your child can reasonably accomplish in a twelve month period by providing specially designed instruction and related services. Short-term objectives are specific steps that help your child reach an annual goal.<br><br>The IEP will list appropriate ways for the school to find out if your child is or is not making progress, and how this will be measured through the short-term goals. A schedule for deciding, at least once a year, if goals and objectives are being met will be listed as well as who is responsible for carrying out each short-term objective. Parents should be informed through home visits, progress reports, or parent/teacher conferences at least every 6 months. Federal and state regulations do not require the parent's signature on the IEP. You may be asked to sign the IEP or Conference Summary Report to record your attendance at the meeting. |

*"I also learned that my written information about Sarah could be very helpful in the planning process as well as make me feel more comfortable. There is an information sheet later in this booklet that helped me organize my thoughts. There are also some tips that have been helpful to other parents as they prepared for the ARC meeting."*



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| THE STEPS | THE PROCESS |
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| **Step 5 Placement:** Deciding where your child will receive specially designed instruction and related services. | After the IEP is written, the ARC will decide where the specially designed instruction and related services will be provided. Related services may include but are not limited to the following: Adaptive Physical Education, Early Identification, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Psychological Services, Speech/Language Therapy, Audiology, Medical Evaluations, Parent Counseling/Training, School Health Services, Social Services in School and Transportation. The decision of where this specially designed instruction will take place is called placement. Your child has the right to receive instruction and to take part in the primary program activities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This means, that as much as possible, your child has a right to be with children who do not have educational disabilities. Remember that the LRE is not the same for every child and some key questions to ask are:<br>• What does the IEP say about your child needs?<br>• Where can your child receive what the IEP says and be with other children who do not have educational disabilities?<br><br>The first place considered is always the regular primary classroom. This decision depends on the kind of support your child needs, the supports that are given to the teacher, and the changes that can be made within the classroom setting.<br><br>If this is the first time your child is to receive special education (specially designed instruction and related services), the school district must have your written permission to place your child. Your written permission for initial (first time) placement is required by federal and state regulations. |

*"This was very close to my heart because I wanted my daughter with other kids her age as much as possible ... that's where she is happiest. We, as the ARC, were able to decide together that being in kindergarten with some support was the best place for her."*

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| THE STEPS | THE PROCESS |
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| **Step 6 Implementation:** Carrying out specially designed instruction and related services to meet the IEP goals and objectives for your child. | Once you have given written permission for placement, your child will begin to receive specially designed instruction and related services based on the IEP. Instruction and services will be provided by school staff and others listed on the IEP as implementors. School staff or service providers are listed by job title (i.e. regular primary teacher, special education teacher of learning disabilities, speech therapist, occupational therapist, etc.) These implementors provide on-going activities to help your child achieve IEP short-term objectives, and keep records on how your child is doing during the year. |
| **Step 7 Review:** Reviewing your child's IEP and the services provided; and making needed changes in the IEP of placement to meet your child's identified needs. This might take place at least once a year. | Federal and state regulations require the ARC to review your child's IEP within one (1) calendar year of the date of the ARC meeting when the current IEP was completed. This review is called the Annual Review. Regulations also require the school district to re-evaluate your child on or before the third year anniversary of the determination of eligibility.<br><br>Even though an ARC meeting must be held at least once a year to review your child's IEP and placement, a review may be requested by you or any other member of the ARC at any time. When it is time for the Annual Review of your child's IEP, the school will notify you in writing about the ARC meeting. At this meeting, you and other team members will review your child's IEP and records kept by the school staff and service providers to decide if short-term objectives and goals have been met. The ARC also decides if |

*"Sarah's IEP goals required a team of professionals including a speech person, her teacher, and an aide. I felt strongly that it was both their responsibility and mine to monitor the IEP to make sure it was working for Sarah."*

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*"Sarah's teachers kept me informed about how she was doing. When we met as an ARC, that ongoing contact made it easy for me to discuss her progress and for all of us to come up with improvements in her planning as her needs changed. It was a high priority to me to be able to attend these ARC meetings. The school worked with me to schedule them so that everyone who needed to be there was able to attend."*

also decides if your child still needs specially designed instruction and related services. If services are still needed, the ARC makes changes in your child's IEP as needed.

The school district will provide you with a written notice of all decisions made at an ARC meeting. You will also be given a full explanation of your rights. If you are at the meeting, you will have been a part of the decision-making process; and you may get the notice at that time. If you are not at the meeting, the notice of decision-making will be mailed to you.

... "If you are the parent or guardian of a child with disabilities, I would encourage you to look into community services, school programs, and support groups in your area. You are not alone with your child in this situation. True enough, there are many persons who do not possess the insight necessary to gain access into the inner workings of our special childrens' hearts and minds, but I believe that working together is the only way that we as parents and citizens of the human race can begin to create acceptance of all people, not just the healthy minded and able bodied."

Barbara T. Warnick
Franklin County, Kentucky



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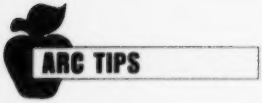



**Some Tips That May Make You Feel More Comfortable As You Prepare for the Admissions and Release Committee Meeting (ARC)**

**BEFORE THE MEETING:**

- You may bring someone with you to the meeting. They can be with you in the meeting or be in the building.
- Review any forms you may see at the meeting. Ask an ARC team member to let you see them. They may be posted in offices so families can view them.
- Request copies of any information that will be shared during the meeting.
- Take time to talk to your child's teacher before the meeting. Set a time to observe the primary classroom.
- Complete a summary of your child's strengths and interests. A sample sheet is included that you may want to use. Bring this with you to the meeting, and share the information.
  You may also bring photos, videos, etc. to share.

**DURING THE MEETING:**

- Arrive early the day of the meeting so you can meet other members of the ARC committee.
- Take your time and feel good about it. This meeting is very important. Don't feel rushed! Ask as many questions as you like.
- Remember it is the responsibility of the ARC to make decisions for your child's special education placement. This will be based upon the recommendations discussed. If you are not in agreement with the decisions being made, know that you can request a second ARC meeting to follow up on specific areas of concerns.
- The school will provide you with a copy of your child's IEP.

- At initial placement, you will be asked to sign a form giving permission for your child to receive special education and related services from the school district. You may withdraw permission at any time.

**AFTER THE MEETING AND ON-GOING:**

- Always be open to suggestions. The ARC, with you as a member, is a team working together for one cause - to help your child.

- Remember, you are the most important member of the ARC and the expert on your child.

- Based on your knowledge of your child, make a list of:

  - your child's strengths and needs.
  - questions and concerns that you may have.
  - what motivates/interests your child.
  - health and safety concerns including specific medical needs, allergies, etc.
  - special equipment/adaptions needed.
  - special assistance your child may need, such as feeding, toileting, etc.

The following is a form that you could use to help you get ready for the ARC meeting. Take time to think about each section on the form, fill it out answering the questions in each block, and take it with you when you go to the meeting.

# INFORMATION ABOUT MY CHILD

| These things please me most about my child: | Here's what my child does well: | My child really likes these: |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| **Right now I'm most concerned about:** | **I would like my child to learn to do these in the future:** | **My child learns more easily when:** |
| | | |
| **I think these services would help my child:** | **Other help our family could use is:** | **I would like to be involved in my child's program in these ways:** |
| | | |

We hope this handbook will prove both informative and helpful. It is our goal as parents and professionals to provide a comprehensive yet uncomplicated process for early childhood transition. We recognize that transition from preschool to primary does not come without family concerns, and we have tried to give you a guided tour of what might be ahead. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact one of the following:

- on supplemental services-call or write for:
  A Guide To Supplemental Services For Families Of Young Children (cost $3.00), write:

  Project STEPS
  Child Development Centers of the Bluegrass, Inc.
  465 Springhill Drive
  Lexington, Kentucky 40503-1233
  (606) 278-0549

- on your child's education-call or write:

  Kentucky Department of Education
  Divisions of Preschool Programs or Primary Education
  Capital Plaza Tower
  500 Mero Street
  Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
  (502) 564-7056

- The Primary School: A Resource Guide for Parents (cost $8.00)
  The Partnership for Kentucky School Reform
  P.O. Box 1658
  Lexington, Kentucky 40592-1658

- on other transition resources:
  Meeting The Challenge: Transition Resources for Parents of Young Children with Special Developmental Needs (cost $6.00)

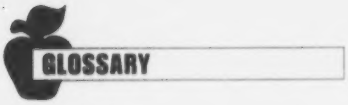
  Project STEPS
  Child Development Centers of the Bluegrass, Inc.
  465 Springhill Drive
  Lexington, Kentucky 40503-1233
  (606) 278-0549

- on the law...contact your local school district, Family Resource Center, Parent Center, Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network (Ky SPIN) (1-800-525-7746) or Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, Protection and Advocacy Division (1-800-372-2988).

"Being the parent of a child with disabilities can be very challenging. I urge you to ask questions and get involved. You will find many folks out there that will help you negotiate the special education maze, enable you to get the very best services available for your child, find other parents who share your situation, and provide an enormous amount of emotional support."

Connie Coovert
Lexington, Kentucky

# WELCOME TO YOUR NEW PRIMARY PROGRAM!




**Definitions of Terms and Phrases**

The following terms and phrases are ones you as a parent of a child or youth with a disability will hear and use as you work with the school district. The terms and phrases are defined as they relate to children and youth with disabilities.

**Admissions and Release Committee (ARC)** - A committee responsible for making decisions about the identification, evaluation, placement, and provision of a free appropriate public education for a child or youth with disabilities. **Parents of the child or youth are always members of this committee.**

**Annual Review** - A meeting of the ARC that takes place within one (1) calendar year of the date the ARC completed the current Individual Education Program (IEP). At this meeting, the ARC will review and revise the IEP as needed.

**Child Find** - Activities each local school district completes to locate, identify, and evaluate each child or youth, age birth through twenty-one, within the district's geographical boundaries.

**Confidentiality** - The protection of the privacy of all personally identifiable information and records of a child or youth.

**Due Process** - A system that guarantees each individual equal protection and treatment under the law. It addresses the steps which assure the right of the child or youth with a disability and the parents to be fully informed and included in any decisions which affect the education of the child or youth.

**Due Process Hearing** - A hearing requested by parents of a child or youth with a disability or the school district to settle a disagreement about the identification, evaluation, placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education.

**Education for All Handicapped Children Act - Public Law 94-142** - The law was passed by Congress in 1975 and has been amended. An amendment in 1990 changed the name of the law to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Evaluation** - A process of gathering information about the educational needs and abilities of a child or youth through individual tests, review of school work and school records, behavioral observations, interviews, and rating scales.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** - IDEA defines FAPE as specially designed instruction and related services provided for children and youth with educational disabilities at no cost to parents. The school may charge incidental fees which are normally charged to children and youth without disabilities or their parents as part of the regular education program.

**Identification** - Collection and use of all available information to decide if a child or youth has a suspected disability and possibly needs specially designed instruction and should be referred for evaluation.

**Independent Evaluation** - An evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of a child or youth.

**Individual Education Program (IEP)** - A written plan of action developed by an Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) to meet the specially designed instruction and related service needs of a child or youth with a disability.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** - The purpose of this law is to make sure that all children and youth with disabilities, who are between the ages of 3 and 21, have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE). IDEA includes special education (specially designed instruction and related services) designed to meet the unique needs of a child or youth with disabilities.

**Kentucky Administrative Regulations (KARs) Related to Exceptional Children** - These regulations establish requirements necessary to assure ... uniformity in providing specially designed instruction and related services to children and youth with disabilities and to conform with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** - This is the educational setting in which a child or youth with a disability can learn effectively, based upon unique needs and capabilities, and interact with similar age peers who are not disabled.

**Mediation** - This is one way to settle disagreements between parents and school personnel without going to a due process hearing. Parents and school districts are not legally required to use mediation.

**Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation** - An individual evaluation done by a team or group of people who are trained to give the tests and procedures and interpret the results.

**Native Language** - The language used in the home for communication by the parent of the child or youth.

**Non-discriminatory Testing** - Tests given in the language a child or youth uses and in a way that a child or youth can best answer.

**Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)** - The federal government agency responsible for special education in the United States.

**Parent** - A parent, a guardian, a person acting as a parent of a child or youth, a permanent foster parent or a surrogate parent appointed by the local school district.

**Placement** - The location where the individual education program (IEP) for an individual child or youth with a disability is implemented.

**Procedural Safeguards** - All rights that are guaranteed to the parent and the child or youth with disabilities under Subpart E of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Preschool Education** - Programs for young children that focus on the cognitive (thinking), language/communication, physical (motor development, self help/adaptive behavior), social and emotional development of a child.

**Referral** - A written request for a child or youth to be individually tested to determine if the child or youth has an educational disability and needs specially designed instruction and related services.

**Related Services** - Additional services that a child or youth with a disability may need to benefit from specially designed instruction.

**Special Education** - The specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of a child or youth with a disability that is provided at no cost to parents or guardians.

**Specially Designed Instruction** - Modifications or alterations in instructional methods, techniques, materials, media, or content, needed for a child or youth with a disability to meet Individual Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives.

**Surrogate Parent** - A person assigned by the school district to represent a child or youth with a disability when the natural parents or guardian are not known or cannot be located or when the child or youth is a ward of the state.

**Transition Plan** - A written plan for children or youth with a disability which will assist them in the process of changing from one program to another (e.g. early intervention services to school district education program), one grade to another, one organizational level to another (e.g. primary to intermediate), and entry to and exit from school district programs.

**Transition Services** - Services needed by a child or youth with a disability to meet the outcomes in the transition plan of the child or youth.

**Triennial Review** - A re-evaluation done every three (3) years on or before the third anniversary of the meeting when the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) determined a child or youth eligible for specially designed instruction and related services.

**Youth** - When a child reaches the age of twelve (12) he or she will be known as a youth.

## KENTUCKY "EARLY CHILDHOOD" ACRONYMS AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **ADA** | Americans with Disabilities Act |
| **ADD** | Area Development Districts |
| **ADHD** | Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder |
| **CDA** | Child Development Associate |
| **CEC** | Council for Exceptional Children |
| **CEC** | Child Evaluation Center |
| **CHC** | Commission for Handicapped Children |
| **CHIP** | Coordinated Health Intervention Project |
| **CHR** | Cabinet for Human Resources |
| **CSPD** | Comprehensive System of Personnel Development |
| **DCP** | Disabled Children's Program |
| **DEC** | Division of Early Childhood |
| **DEIC** | District Early Intervention Committees |
| **DD** | Developmental Disabilities |
| **DD** | Developmental Delay |
| **DECS** | Division of Exceptional Children Services |
| **DHS** | Department for Health Services |
| **DMH/MR** | Department for Mental Health/Mental Retardation Services |
| **DMR** | Division of Mental Retardation Services |
| **DMS** | Department for Medicaid Services |
| **DSI** | Department for Social Insurance |
| **DSS** | Department of Social Services |
| **EBD** | Emotional Behavior Disability |
| **ECAC** | Early Childhood Advisory Council |
| **EHA** | Education for the Handicapped Act |
| **EI** | Early Intervention |
| **EPSDT** | Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment |
| **FRC** | Family Resource Center |
| **FR/YSC** | Family Resource and Youth Services Center |
| **HS** | Head Start |

| | |
|---|---|
| **ICC** | Interagency Coordinating Council |
| **IDEA** | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| **IEP** | Individualized Education Program |
| **IFSP** | Individualized Family Service Plan |
| **ITP** | Infant/Toddler Program |
| **KAEYC** | Kentucky Association for the Education of Young Children |
| **KATS** | Kentucky Assistive Technology Services |
| **KEA** | Kentucky Education Association |
| **KECA** | Kentucky Early Childhood Association |
| **KERA** | Kentucky Education Reform Act |
| **KDE** | Kentucky Department of Education |
| **KEIS** | Kentucky Early Intervention System |
| **KSB** | Kentucky School for the Blind |
| **KSD** | Kentucky School for the Deaf |
| **KEIAC** | Kentucky Early Intervention Awareness Committee |
| **KY-SPIN** | Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network |
| **KYTP** | Kentucky Transition Project |
| **LEA** | Local Education Agency |
| **MCH** | Maternal and Child Health |
| **Mid-South RRC** | Mid-South Regional Resource Center |
| **MR** | Mental Retardation |
| **NAEYC** | National Association for the Education of Young Children |
| **NEC*TAS** | National Early Childhood - Technical Assistance System |
| **OT** | Occupational Therapy |
| **PACE** | Parent and Child Education |
| **PAT** | Parents As Teachers |
| **PIPC** | Preschool Interagency Planning Council |
| **PRAISE** | Preschool Resources Available for Integrated Special Education |
| **PREVIEW** | Preschool resource project for children with visual impairments |
| **PT** | Physical Therapy |
| **RSC** | Regional Service Center |

| | |
|---|---|
| **RTC** | Regional Training Center (early childhood) |
| **SEA** | State Education Agency |
| **SECA** | Southern Early Childhood Association |
| **SFC** | Specially Funded Coordinator (Head Start) |
| **SHIPP** | Severe Handicaps: Integrated Preschool Programs |
| **SKI*HI** | Preschool resource project for children with hearing impairments |
| **SPH** | Severe Profound Handicap |
| **SP/L** | Speech/Language |
| **SSI** | Supplemental Security Income |
| **STEPS** | Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools |
| **TA** | Technical Assistance |
| **TAPP** | Teen-Age Parenting Program |
| **VIPS** | Visually Impaired Preschool Services |

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